

A Cultural Autopsy on Male Circumcision and Social Capital

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Abstract: Among the many African rites of passage, male circumcision remains one of the most important and outstanding because of the vital elements associated with it. A case study of this ritual was undertaken among the Bukusu People of Bungoma County in Kenya. Many written documents on Bukusumale ritual circumcision have looked at this rite from various viewpoints that include health, education, and religion. Most of these studies have failed to shed light on the underlying reasons for its persistence despite the opposition since time immemorial. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining Bukusumale ritual circumcision as a source of social capital and it is concerned with the common factors as to why the Bukusu ritual of circumcision has continued despite the opposition from various quarters. Based on the main objectives, the study first looks at the rite of passage of male circumcision as a process of transition; hence examine the philosophies, attitudes, and perceptions about male ritual circumcision. Secondly, the study explores the elements and meaning of social capital in reference to male ritual circumcision. Thirdly, the study investigates the role of male ritual circumcision in the generation of social capital in the context of social economy. In other words, male ritual circumcision moulds young people for life in the society as the initiates are compelled to practice the norms and values of society and expertise for playing effective role in society. Making sense of the data collected, the study employed Social Capital theory. The study relied on primary and secondary sources of data. The study also employed both non-participant and participant observations as tools of data collection. Focus group discussions and interviews were also used in primary data collection. The study was done in Bungoma County of Western Kenya, where the Bukusu people predominantly live. Qualitative approach was used in the collection and analysis of data from 186 respondents. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to identify respondents who included initiates, government leaders, cultural and church leaders, and circumcisers. The secondary sources of information included, library written materials like books, journals, thesis and dissertations, reports and articles. A descriptive analysis was undertaken by bringing together, comparisons, and interpreting both primary and secondary data in the light of the objectives of this study, research questions, and theoretical framework. The findings were descriptively presented as narrated themes. The findings of this study are an account of Bukusu male ritual circumcision that is transforming to conform to the social change and economic situation of the society. Bukusu male circumcision is a niche for social and economic development. These are an invaluable assessment tool in the evaluation of the past, present, and future perspectives of male circumcision with focus on social capital component. Most important, the findings are a repository for reference by future generations in scholarship and social-cultural studies.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In order to arrive at a clear picture of the relationship between male ritual circumcision and social capital among the Bukusu people, one has to be familiar with the reason why this ritual is still cherished by the Bukusu people. The main themes discussed in this chapter relates to the concept of social capital, its elements meaning. This is further emphasized by the social capital theory which states the significance and value of social capital to humanity and society. The compositional thought of social capital in reference to male ritual circumcision is also emphasized in detail. Social capital is a social phenomenon which is invaluable for the growth, development and stability of the society. Therefore, it has to be built through organization of rituals such as Bukusu male ritual circumcision. This is done with a focus on the social values embedded in the ritual. The continued survival of this ritual is informed by the tenacity it manifests, hence, the need to conceptualize through African voices with a view to defend it. On the basis that this ritual is fundamental in the society, the study concluded that it is not just about the spilling of blood. This is so because of the niche of social capital as it is celebrated as a festival. The above themes were generated based on the research questions to respondents.

A. Problem Statement

African cultures have suffered rejection, disdain, condescension, oppression especially from outsiders' lenses; and worse more from the African Nations, governments, scholars, elites, and leaders who mistakenly associate development and modernization as a disregard of African cultures at the expense of western cultures. Cultural anthropologists believe that this kind of an attitude towards cultures such as Bukusu male ritual circumcision need to change and different stakeholders to accept to examine and reexamine them holistically. Such a holistic autopsy of it could bring out all the progressive aspects to inform the immense social capital embedded in it; and also single out all the retrogressive aspects and curve away forward to address them. This, these cultural anthropologists could give the rite of male circumcision its dignity and people practice it as they wish to enjoy their cultural rights enshrined in many countries' constitutions and bill of rights. The study therefore sought to answer the major research question: What are the major elements of social capital that would highly contribute to the growth and development social economy?

B. The Purpose of the study

This study investigated the relationship between Bukusumale circumcision ritual and social capital. Among the areas that were examined included: First, ritual circumcision as source of social capital which is the indigenous knowledge passed on to the initiates through this rite. Second, the ways in which social capital embedded in the circumcision ritual constitute the adolescents' moral, economic and intellectual development. Third, focus in this study was to investigate the relationship between institutions; that is how the ritual circumcision constitutes social capital that would be basis for the construction of social enterprises in social economy, social cohesion and values.

C. Study Objectives

1. To understand the elements and meaning of social capital in reference to Bukusu male circumcision
2. To evaluate the relationship between social capital and Bukusu male ritual circumcision
3. To investigate the role and function of social capital to the society

D. Study Questions

1. What are elements and meaning of social capital?
2. What is your understanding of the relationship between male ritual circumcision and social capital?
3. How does these values that are generated from the ritual in the form of social capital bear positive impact in the contemporary society?

E. Theoretical Framework

The current study on social capital was broadly guided by social capital theory as advanced by John Field (2003), as comprehensive tool of analysis when dealing with issues of social relations. Beem (1999) observes:

The central focus of social capital theory is that relationships matter. The central idea is that social networks are a valuable asset. Interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit the social fabric. A sense of belonging and the concrete experience of social networks and the relationships of trust and tolerance that can be involved; can, it is argued, bring great benefits to people. Trust between individuals thus becomes trust between strangers and trust of a broad fabric of social institutions; ultimately, it becomes a shared set of values, virtues, and expectations within society as a whole. Without this interaction, on the other hand, trust decays; at a certain point, this decay begins to manifest itself in serious social problems. The concept of social capital contends that building or rebuilding community and trust requires face-to-face encounters (p. 20).

In agreement to the above sentiments of Beem, Halpern (2009) observes, "There is now a range of evidence that communities with a good stock of such 'social capital' are more likely to benefit from lower crime figures, better health, higher educational achievement, and better economic growth. However, there can also be a significant downside. Groups and organizations with high social capital have the means (and sometimes the motive) to work to exclude and subordinate others. Furthermore, the experience of living in close-knit communities can be stultifying – especially to those who feel they are 'different' in some important way (p. 123)".

F. Research Methodology

This chapter represents the research methodology that was employed in conducting this study. It details a selected research design, what exactly was done and how it was done or carried out. The researcher also referred to online journals whenever necessary. The research design was characteristic of purposive and snowball-sampling techniques. Observation, questionnaire, participant and non-participant observations and focus group discussion were employed.

Table 1: Bungoma County Population by Size and Density

Sub-County	Area/Size in Km	Male	Female	Total	Density person /Km
Chwele	98.6	56,965	65,525	122,217	1,240
Webuye	74.6	42,077	49,458	91,535	1,227
Tonagaren	88.2	99,042	114,710	213,752	1,234
Kanduyi	91.1	100,102	119,109	219,211	1,342
Mount Elgon	80.3	79,098	112,110	191,208	1,210
Kimilili	90.2	110,179	111,016	221,195	1,240
TOTAL	523	487,463	571,928	1,059,118	7,493

Source Bungoma District Development Plan, 2009

From the statistics above, it is notable that the female population is slightly higher than that of males. This could be explained by both mobility and average life expectancy of the area. Statistical analysis given could also explain the prevalence of circumcision among *the Bukusu people*. Bungoma District was estimated to have an adult population of 1.2 million by 2012. This figure would comprise of 46.3% male and 53.7% female.

Sampling was undertaken as follows: First for initiates before and after circumcision. The researcher began by writing down the names of the initiates that the researcher knew or were suggested to him through his contact persons. Their age, and location (Kanduyi, Kimilili, Chwele, Mount Elgon, Tongaren and Webuye sub counties) were specific characteristic descriptions. It is worth noting that the age threshold for participating in this research was 18 years. Then from that pool the researcher picked the ones that were representative as on the table below;

Table 2: Representation of the initiates

Initiates' Age	Total
10 - 12	4
11 - 15	6
16 - 18	2
Total	12

Source: Researcher, 2018

The above table shows the age representation of the selected initiates that participated in this research. Second is the sample for church and religious leaders. The researcher was required to work with those who were conversant with circumcision issues among *the Bukusu* in order to provide a balanced perspective on the subject. The leaders who were accessible, available and willing to participate in the study were selected. The sample for church/religious leaders was selected by considering denominational representation in the study area. Table 3 provided information on the selection of the participating denominational leaders. The selection of denomination was based on its shade and strength in the study area. This explains the selection of the Friends - Quakers, Anglican, Catholic, and Pentecostal. Willingness and availability to participate in the study was by choice.

The selection of participation was based on denominational seniority both in age and position and availability. Hence, the senior most, willing and available denominational leaders, women leaders and pastors(s) of the participating denominations were selected. The researcher pre-determined to work with a number of 14 (Fourteen) denominational leaders according to denominational numerical strength as illustrated in the Table 3 below:

Table 3: Representation of church Leaders

Church/Religious Leaders	Total
Friends Church 1 Senior Officer: 1 Woman Leader & 3 pastors)	5
Catholic (1 Senior Officer, 1 women leader & 2 pastors)	4
The Anglican (1 Senior Officer, 1 Woman leader & 1 pastor)	3
The Pentecostal representation: 2 Pastors	2
Total	14

Source: Researcher, 2018

The above table shows the denominational representation of the leaders that participated in this research. Finally, the sample for the Cultural elders, parents and government officers were drawn as follows: The researcher had the contact of some of the members of the *Bukusu* elders council which comprises of twenty members' sample of five elders was drawn to facilitate a focus group of four members and an informant on the *Bukusu* culture on Male ritual circumcision. The sample selection was drawn based on geographic location, wealth of knowledge on the subject, accessibility, availability and willingness to participate in this study. Thus, the most knowledgeable, from the peers perspective, yet well-located elders were selected to participate. Circumcisers, parents, and a nurse in charge of reproductive health attached at Bungoma County Referral Hospital were purposefully sampled to provide information on the status of their interaction with circumcised boys who are brought for medication in the course of their work. Hence, Table 4 below is a tabulation of these sample categories:

Table 4: Representation of *Bukusu* Culture Experts (elders), Government officer, Health and Social Workers

Designation	Total
Culture Experts (On <i>Bukusu</i> male ritual circumcision) 8 parents, 5 circumcisers, and 8 cultural elders	21
Social Worker	1
Government official (County Gender & Social Development Officer)	1
1 Health Worker	1
Total	24

Source: Researcher, 2018

The above table shows the other resource persons involved in this research in order to provide an expert view.

The sampling strategy employed was purposive non-probabilistic informed by the general presence of specific shade of informants as represented by the selected categories among the *Bukusu* and a special knowledge a particular respondents had pertaining the subject of study. The small sample size is recommended in qualitative study for its effectiveness to explore in-depth of the subject and not for generalization (Fain, 2013). The researcher chose to work with a sample size of 186 respondents: 136 respondents; 12 initiates; 14 church/religious leaders, and 24 experts on *Bukusu* culture and circumcision ritual who included 1 Gender & Social Development Officer and 1 Reproductive Health Nurse. They were selected to provide experimental information on *Bukusu* male ritual circumcision, *Bukusu* culture male ritual circumcision and the influence of Christianity and modernity. It is also worth noting that to the sample size in qualitative study do not automatically control the quality of importance to the study (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013).

In a nutshell, the research methodology pertinent to the study has been discussed. In summary, focus was put on the research design: Descriptive research approach, the qualitative dimensions of case study research and research strategy. Moreover, data collection methods, such as interview, observations and content analysis was evaluated in terms of how they are effectively used and eventually data collected was presented as narrated themes.

II. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL: DEFINITION AND ORIGIN

In this current study, social capital is perceived as a very vital variable because it is going to be studied alongside the main variable being male ritual circumcision. According to Haralambos and Horlborn (2007) opines, "the concept of social capital first arose in the literature during the 1960s" (P. 863). To date, numerous scholars have written about its importance. Bourdieu (1986) argue, "Social capital is composed of a variety of accumulated resources, which can be transmitted to the next generation and which require deliberate economic and cultural investments (p. 60)". And according to Coleman (1988), "Social capital is a feature of the structure of society, a kind of social good that emerges from reciprocal obligations and expectations, and expands to the group at large (pp. 94-95)".

Most scholars have come up with definitions of social capital. The researcher is going to use these definitions to determine the extent to which social capital can influence male ritual circumcision or vice versa. Putnam (2000) observes, "Social capital is the connections among individuals-social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. The features of social organization, such as networks, norms and social trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (p. 67)". It is all about connections and social networking in the community. Silver (2008) opines, "Hence, social capital is an inherent collective attribute of social life that enables people to co-operate. This is strategy meant to improve the efficiency of the collective community or organizational actions (pp. 65-78)".

Because we have various definitions for social capital, there is need to settle on particular that would articulate the relational dynamics with male ritual circumcision. Laor& Shapiro (2007) argue, "In the absence of these features, the individual's qualities cannot be translated into the collective added value of social capital. The various definitions share three common components: The structural factor of organizations and social networks, the behavioral aspect of the amount of participation and involvement members invest in these networks, and the emotional or cognitive factor of the level of solidarity and reciprocal social trust among members of the networks, as well as the level of trust between them and social institutions (p. 151)". The current research concentrates on social capital as it pertains to individuals, focusing on the ways in which, "Social capital is converted into other forms of capital especially economic or cultural capital. Individuals who have similar material capital but differ in terms of their social and cultural capital can use the latter in various ways for their own benefit (Svendsen&Svendsen, 2003:32; Pichler& Wallace, 2009: 25)".

Woolcock (1998) observes, "Social capital is a broad term, with scholars interpreting and developing the concept in various ways. Social capital stresses the importance of concentrating on the sources rather than the outcome of social elements. He however tries to draw together the main features from the various interpretations within the fields of sociology, politics and economics into a helpful overarching definition of social capital as encompassing the norms and networks facilitating collective action for mutual benefit (p. 155)". The protagonists of this concept of social capital recommends, "A concentration on the sources of social capital, that is, the nature of relationships, rather than its supposed consequences. He warns against confusing the consequences, which are said to indicate the presence of social capital and social capital itself (p. 155)".

Bourdieu (2002) opines that, "Social capital is related to membership in a group, whether family, school or class. It refers to the role of occasions, places and practices as attempts by members of the group to control the introduction of new members. Mutually recognizable signs, controlled for legitimacy by the existing members of the group, aid institution into a group (p. 86)". Foley (1999) analyses Bourdieu's sentiments about social capital as follows: "Links of cultural capital theories are evident within Bourdieu's conception of social capital. The mention by Bourdieu about the role of occasions, places and practices, suggests that a role of rituals such as male circumcision could find a place within this conceptualization of social capital. Contrary to cultural capital, social capital is constrained within a field, with social groups and sub-groups being organized within the field under study: in this research's case, that of Male ritual circumcision and social capital. Bourdieu's approach to social capital has met with approval from other scholars (p. 172)".

Having analyzed the contributions of various scholars, they seem to agree with Bourdieu on the concept of social capital. Adkins (2005) observes, "Praises the clarity of Bourdieu's approach (p. 211). And for Portes (1998), "Bourdieu's analysis of the concept is the most theoretically refined amongst those of the recent scholars. Bourdieu's critical perspective is useful. Other renowned scholars like Wallis and Dollery (2004) also consider Bourdieu's and Coleman's sociological approaches are promising, that Putman's work on associations has been valued by economists (p. 18)". On the contrary, "Fine (2001) criticizes Bourdieu for his emphasis on the cultural goods often associated with the class which Bourdieu recognizes as being used to promote access to resources, as tainting the purity of the social capital concept" (p. 38).

Critique of the understanding of this concept of social capital continues to elicit much reactions; Critique is focused towards the three major protagonists of social capital: Coleman, Bourdieu, and Putman. Field (2003) argue, "Although showing divergent opinion to Bourdieu's conception of social capital in its focus on the individual and their networks, Coleman's approach to the concept shows some contrasts. While Bourdieu sees differential access to social capital as being shaped by historical-cultural transference, a factor over which he sees the individuals as having little control (p. 19)". There is a suggestion to employ various approaches towards understating this concept of social capital. Coleman (1990) holds that "Approaches bring in the conception of rational action, albeit with social and institutional considerations superimposed (p.56)". When defining social capital, "Coleman places emphasis on the structure of relations between actors and among actors and on the facilitation of certain actions of actors within the structures" (p. 98). He sees "social capital as being lodged within the structure, or network, rather than the individual. Echoing Bourdieu's conception, Coleman sees social capital as productive, with the potential for the provision of economic and non-economic resources that allow the achievement of interest (p. 87)".

According to Putman (2000) observes, "Features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Social capital are self-reinforcing and cumulative. It is mutuality at an individual level, with collaborations building connections and trust and then facilitating the consequence of further collaboration (p. 67)". However, in Halpern (2009) critiques Putman's position on social capital,

Despite this mention of the individual level of social capital, Putman's approach concentrates primarily on the public good aspect of social capital: that is, the macro level. His social capital approach focuses on enabling community development through the encouragement of the indirect benefits that membership of civic, leisure and religious organizations could have. He sees these organizations as encouraging the growth of societal virtue, tolerance, reciprocity, and trustworthiness, as well as lessening shirking and lying and improving health.

Putman asserts that, life is easier in a community endowed with substantial stock of social capital. Much of Putman's approaches to social capital is not directly relevant to this study of male ritual circumcision, being focused on macro impacts rather than the individual's experience (p. 35).

However, Putman (2000) view division of social capital into two types: bridging social capital and bonding social capital (p. 19), is potentially useful for framing the examination of social activities in a ritual (p. 103).

III. COMPOSITIONAL THOUGHT OF THE SOCIAL CAPITAL IN REFERENCE TO MALE RITUAL CIRCUMCISION

This section of the study has attempted to analyze the meaning and significance of social capital developed through male ritual circumcision. Bungoma County has been chosen for the case study because of the existence of the Bukusu ritual circumcision which is celebrated every even year as a major ritual event. The findings show that, "The male ritual circumcision contributes to the development of Endurance, Patience, Unity, Hard work, Respect for authority and peers, loyalty, faithfulness, value for family and community, Honesty, Reconciliation and restoration (Wesonga and Wanami, Oral interview 23rd July, 2018)".

Theoretical analysis reveals, "That male ritual circumcision functions as a social platform that regularly activates people for collective actions in the society. However, it is much prudent to begin this discourse by looking at the meaning, significance and elements of social capital in reference to male ritual circumcision. The discourse of this objective is geared towards analyzing Male ritual circumcision as the basic source of social capital; and social capital the generator of the characteristic elements". Analysis in this study is based on a multi-theoretical analysis framework, designed by the researcher. Theoretical Analysis Framework used in this study is informed by the following: First, Society exists in a context. Second, In this context, there are needs that threaten the survival of the society. Third, to survive, society uses culture and social institutions (circumcision ritual) to shape human behavior. Fourth, Positive human behavior (resulting from and shaped by circumcision ritual) for instance values, roles, sense of self, sense of others and sense of community generate social capital that is used to meet the needs of society.

Theoretical Analysis Framework:

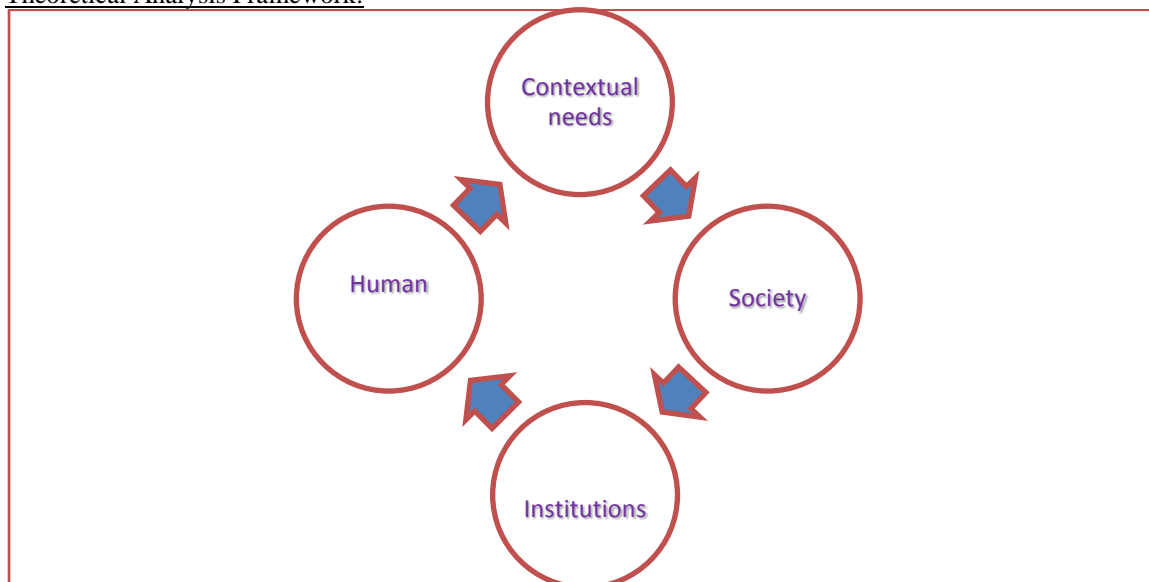


Figure 1: is a cyclic influence of cultural rites such as male ritual circumcision on society, institutions available in the society, humanity as the main factor, and the contextual needs manifested in the society for human need.

IV. SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ITS ELEMENTS AS MANIFESTED THROUGH BUKUSU MALE RITUAL CIRCUMCISION

In Kenya, studies on how social capital can be tapped from rituals and used for national development are scarce. By learning from the Bukusu circumcision ritual, particularly the lived experiences of those who have undergone the ritual, this study will contribute to this perspective. The study therefore brought to light the rationale for which Kenya can identify, preserve its socio-cultural resources and utilize them for development. The study intends to add voice to the discourse on socio-cultural innovations that local communities can advance in order to build peaceful and sustainable communities in the post-2018 era. By extension, some of the aspects of the ritual may gain resonance with other rituals applied in other parts of the world. This would

contribute to the global discourse on preservation and use of indigenous knowledge and sociocultural resources – social capital for sustainable development.

The researcher would like to be clearer on what entails social capital that is generated in the process of Bukusu male ritual circumcision. As it has been extensively defined from various perspectives, Robert Putman (1995) opines as follows:

Social capital refers to, features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Social capital consists of resources within communities which are created through the presence of high levels of: Social networks, Social cohesion, Shared norms, values and behavior (Respect for authority & peers, Loyalty/faithfulness, Value for family/community, Honesty, Trust - Reciprocity and mutuality), Endurance, Patience, Hard work). Therefore, social capital is that intangible thing that exists in rituals, manifests through individuals and organizations within a community. Most people recognize social capital as being the connections and trusting contacts that people make while going about their daily duties. These contacts can be used on a mutual and reciprocal basis to further the development of the community (p. 32).

In this section, the researcher discusses the meaning and purpose of some of the phenomenal elements of social capital as product of Bukusu male circumcision ritual. As shown in **Figure 2**, male ritual circumcision has the capacity to generate immense social capital in form of trust, integrity, honesty, social cohesion, tolerance and so on. Meyer (2011) observes “social capital is not something unique other than it is essentially relational, not something owned by any individual but rather something shared in common (p. 1)”. Bayat (2005) provides a more specific definition of trust in which he defines it as “the understanding that a person or a member of the society or social group will act in a manner that is mutually beneficial... (p. 16)”. What this definition has in common with the one offered by Wepener (2005) is, “a focus on the relations between people and the networks created as a result of these relationships (p. 12)”. However, the question is: “Why delve into the study and discourse of social capital in reference to Bukusu male ritual circumcision?” Bayat (2005) observes, “Social capital holds out the promise of improving access to resources amongst and across different groups and people. So we are interested in social capital because we consider it a new way of thinking about how resources can be mobilized and distributed within society. It is apparently obvious as to why disciplines like economy, sociology, and political science can engage with this concept. Seemingly, social capital is taken as a given, the main question debated is the role of ritual in the creation of social capital (p. 2)”.

FIGURE NO 2: THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

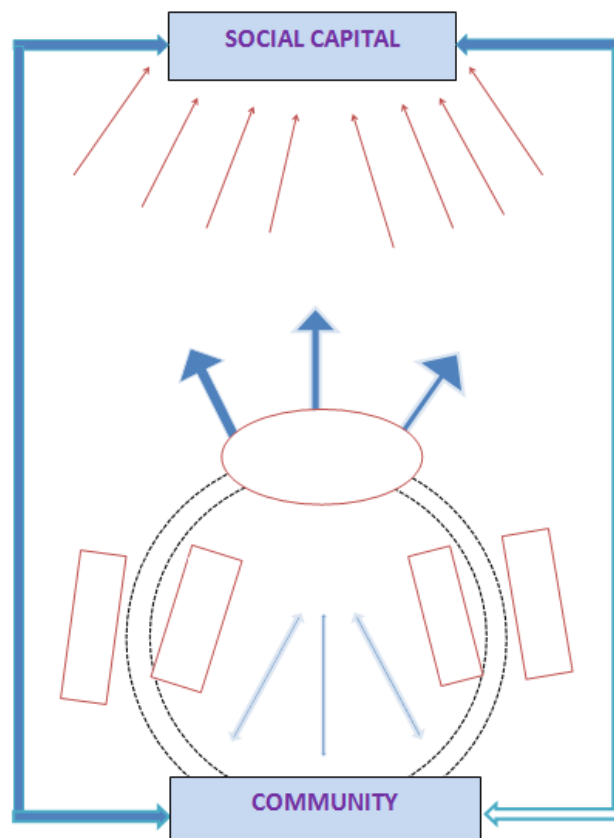


Figure 2 is a conceptual framework of the variables – Bukusu male ritual circumcision and social capital. Circumcision is at the center of effecting social capital and affecting society or community. Upon realizing its full functionality, male ritual circumcision would be in a position to influence the social, economic, and political standing of the society. This can happen through:

V. BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL THROUGH MALE RITUAL CIRCUMCISION: A DISCOURSE ON SOCIAL VALUES

Mbiti (1991), “There are innumerable rituals and ceremonies in Africa Religion...a lot of visible demonstration of African Religion occurs through rituals and festivals. These embody what people believe, what they value, and they wish to apply in daily life. Through rituals, people not only act their religion but communicate it to the younger generation” (p. 131). In Drane (2004: 90), Mbiti provides a niche into the purpose of this study: To examine how Male ritual circumcision is the source of social capital; which if fully mobilized can contribute the development of social enterprises in the social economy. Through the ritual action and word, people feel able to exercise a certain amount of control over the invisible world and the forces of nature. In this way, man feels himself to be not just a passive creature in the universe, but a creative agent.

Rituals and festival build social capital through community resources. When people congregate together for celebrating, it becomes the basis for the formation of social capital. Arcodia (2008), “Rituals and festivals attendance builds social capital by developing community resources. The organizers who are responsible for administrative aspects of the ritual and festival, whether they are paid workers or not, must interact with the local business and general community to make arrangements about the ritual ceremony. This interaction over the period of the ritual and festival’s organization raises awareness of community resources and expertise, produces social links between previously unrelated groups and individuals, identifies possibilities for the development of the community’s resources, and generally encourages a stronger interaction between existing community organizations” (p.11).Arcodia (2008) continues to observe:

Festival and rituals encourage a more effective use of community resources by giving organizers and participants the opportunity to explore local resources that previously may have remained anonymous, perhaps protected by individual gatekeepers or ethnic social boundaries or otherwise lost within the complex social web of community structures and not generally available for everyone’s use. The social networks that can develop through the organization of rituals and festival have the potential of being maintained far beyond the short life of the festival or ritual. In the case where festivals and rituals are regular events, this can have a far greater long-term benefit (p. 12).

In Friedland and Sirianni, (2000), “Festivals and rituals”associated with the Bukusu male ritual circumcision, “may not only be a catalyst for revitalizing existing partnerships, but also for developing new ones. Those festivals and rituals which involve volunteers provide opportunities for training and development in a variety of ways and skills and encourage more effective use of local educational, business, and community spaces. These community networks ensure a high-level of social connectivity by reintroducing a healthy relational dimension to societies” (p. 23).

Alomes (1985), “Rituals and the social capital play a key social role in different societies and cultures. While the role may vary in significance according to the socio-cultural environment” (p. 78) In connection to this, “Bukusu community celebration on coming together is a common denominator. When the Bukusu people community converges together for the purpose of fulfilling ritual and festival, the interaction serves the dual purpose of increasing the awareness of community resources while engendering social cohesiveness through cooperation brought about by common goals” (p. 97). As observed during the forum of discussion, “upon achieving a common goal, such as staging of festival, the community celebration serves to further increase the development of social capital via the generation of community spirit and a general sense of good will. Alongside the provision for a community to celebrate, ritual and festivals can provide to the society a host of values and benefits as articulated below” (August, 2018):

A. Social networks

The entire process of Bukusu male ritual circumcision orchestrates the assembling of people from different social setting with a view to celebrate. Oxoby (2009) reiterates as follows: By bringing together people of diverse backgrounds promotes well-being by allowing the production of mutually beneficial norms of reciprocity, generalized trust and co-operation. All the theorists of social capital, Coleman, Bourdieu, and Putman see social networks as conduits of social capital (p. 45). Putman (2000) specifically mentions, “the role of social networks in relation to culture. Cultural practices including rituals, can bring together diverse groups of people and thus promote value for development. Alternatively, rather than sharing values, cultural events could be used to transcend social barriers: people may make new connections with others whom they perceive to have different, though equally rigid set of values. This view shows synergies with the cultural policies (p. 118)”.

B. Social cohesion

The culmination of the process of Bukusu male ritual circumcision is the operation; thus the cutting of the foreskin of the penis. This day is highly anticipated by parents of the initiate relatives and friends that are all invited to the ceremony. According to Falassi (1987), "When people come to attend the festival and rituals; they do not do that in a vacuum or it does not just happen in vain. Festival and ritual attendance can also develop social capital by promoting social cohesiveness given that a festival is often a recurring social occasion which all members of a community have opportunity to unite and share a worldview through ethnic, linguistic, religious, and historical bonds" (p. 18). Apparently, Galt(1973) "while festival and rituals have the capacity to bring and bind society together, much of the world's social, political, and economic structures and processes have emanated from the philosophies, ideologies, conceptual frameworks, and experiences constructed by dominant culture in the particular area. Social networks are developed when people come together; new relationships are build that establish structures for the development of the social economy" (p. 86).

Inglis (1999), "In response to the challenges of cultural diversity, Australia adopted a comprehensive policy of multiculturalism, and the Australian community is often viewed as a successful model of multiculturalism" (p. 45). Bringing this in to the Kenyan communities, we can see that a lot is lacking. For example, "Australians attend festival and rituals until one could imagine that it is a preserve of the Australia's populace. This may be the result of a multicultural society, which encourages greater participation in festivals that celebrate the character and richness of cultural diversity" (Ibid, 48). According to "The Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Report, 1999:67;

It is important to note, that the potential for growth for social capital is complicated by the heterogeneity of some communities. For example it is most likely possible that social capital develops within a particular subgroup and doing so, alienates another within the same community. Consequently, one of the key that the Australian government is increasingly facing is its ability to not only negotiate the cultural diversity that exists in. society, but to develop and nurture a more common purpose.

Mard Gras (2000), argues, "The development of common social purpose may conceivably be achieved through festival and rituals. Importantly, attendance of such celebrations is a socially valuable process because it gives a voice to the various subgroups whose difference is not caused by ethnicity but lifestyle preferences (p.23)". Mardi Gras continue to observe as follows:

To explore, express and promote the life of our combined community through a cultural focus. We affirm the pride, joy, dignity and identity of our community and its people through events of celebration. We are committed to serving our community. We seek to enable individuals and groups within our community to discover, express and develop their artistic, cultural and political skills and potential (p. 26).

According Janmaat (2011), "Social cohesion is simply referred as the glue that holds society together (P. 61)". Chan (2006) observes, "Social cohesion is a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and horizontal interactions among the members of the society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that include trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioral manifestations (p. 290)". Apparently, social cohesion is the element that advances the ideology of bringing and binding people together for mutual reasons. According to the Organizations for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD Report, 2011), however, warns against the narrow understanding of social cohesion as social capital: The report emphasizes;

It is a broad concept that covers the several dimensions at once, for example, a sense of belonging, active participation, trust, and mobility. Social cohesion is a product of social capital. In instances where rituals gathered people together it becomes a forum when individuals sacrifice their time, effort, and consumption in an effort to co-operate with others. They share on the need to stay together as a homogeneous society. While social cohesion on the other hand refers to a characteristic of society, which depends on the accumulated social capital. It seems that social cohesion is only possible where there is social capital present or available, in other words, social capital is a prerequisite for social cohesion. I would pose a question! Where would we get social capital in the absence of rituals, which bring people together? It becomes apparent that, the lack of social cohesion would point to a lack of social capital.

Putman (2000:112) identifies two styles of social cohesion which may characterize;"social capital: These are bridging and bonding. He explains that bonding social capital is inward looking, that reinforces exclusive identities and promoting homogeneity; whereas bridging social capital is outward looking promoting links between diverse individuals". Putman suggests, "Many groups simultaneously bond across some social dimensions and bridge across others. Bonding social capital as increases solidarity with people who are already similar, bolstering the narrower self and creating strong in-group loyalty. Bridging social capital, however, links people to others who move in different circles" (p. 113). Granovetter's (1973:46), "Weak ties and strong ties also shows parallels to Putman's distinctions between bridging and bonding social capital. According to him, strong ties lead to others who are similar to themselves, while weak ties are valuable in promoting connections to people outside the usual social circle. Weak ties are suggested therefore, as key to the provision of new opportunities for individuals as well as key to their integration into new communities". Bourdieu's (1977)

opines, "Social and cultural capital align closely with the element of social cohesion and with the formation of strong ties. The benefits arising from membership of a select group to be made possible by its solidarity. These profits may be material gained via useful relationships, as well as the symbolic profit gained from being a member of a prestigious group of people. However, Bourdieu's approach also highlights the potential problems of power and elitism engendered by these groups" (p. 24).

C. Shared norms, values and behavior

The sharing of norms of behavior and of values through networks is a key feature of social capital theories. Coleman (1988:87) identifies the family, "As a reinforcer of norms and values thus is a source of social capital. He qualifies this however, by suggesting that the level of social capital a child gains from the parents will vary depending on how much attention the parent gives the child. Relations of the child's parents with both members of the parent's community are important in the development of a child's social capital". On the other hand, Halpern (2005:57) suggests "Higher educational qualification levels result in higher levels of social capital". This in line with Coleman suggests, "Higher levels of social capital tend to result in a child being more likely to gain a higher educational qualification. Thus as it was noted earlier that Bourdieu associates higher education levels to higher cultural capital levels, it could be concluded that higher social capital could result through schooling in higher cultural capital characteristic of social – cultural resources. This suggested association provides further justification for considering the role of both capitals in the ritual festival experience" (p. 89).

Coleman (1988) explains, "Norms and values exist at a macro-social level, but determine the behavior of individuals at the micro level by discouraging or encouraging an action (p. 69)". Coleman (1990) also suggests;

Norms are facilitated by regular communication and will become weaker over time without social relationships to reinforce them. This suggests the potential importance of a festival which brings people together socially as a setting for the auctioning of social capital. Individuals may actually attend events with the aim of sharing and intensifying their own values with others whom they perceive as like-minded - thus sharing the same group dynamics. Issues of elitism may be tied to this perspective. I will delve deeper into looking at how the respective norms and values can be tailored towards the aspects of ritual to create social enterprises that would be beneficial in the social economy (p. 118).

Bukusu "Ritual circumcision manifests quite an array of elements of social capital which will wholly be discussed alongside the aspects of the ritual later in this chapter. For example, trust is closely aligned to the components of norms and values. A close community with strong norms and homogenous interests is likely to have higher levels of trust" (Otiende: 1978: 45). Although Coleman focuses on the exchanges between individuals, he also identifies situations where an activity of common interest may bind together a number of actors. Again, a ritual festival could perhaps be a site of exchange. He explains that this macro-level system of mutual trust occurs: "*through a number of actors...are all engaged in an activity that produces an outcome in which all have similar interest* (p. 188)".

Putman (2000), "Trust is seen by Putman to be an outcome of, as well as a contributor to, social capital (P. 91)". Granovetter (1973) observes;

Social relations as being key to the generation of trust. Trust is generated through frequent interaction and lubricates social life. Putman and other social capital theorists see higher levels of trust within a community as being likely to increase the levels of cooperation and thus build further trust. Thick trust is embedded in strong and frequent inter-personal relationships, whereas thin trust is more generalized, being extended community-wide: that is, beyond personal acquaintances. Both thin and thick trust may be implicated in the role of social capital in the ritual operation and experience (p. 13).

D. Celebration

The ultimate desire of the Bukusu people is to celebrate the victory of overcoming the circumciser's knife by the initiate. The celebration signifies the radical transition from child hood to adulthood. Pardy (1991) opines, "Obviously, in the manifestation of ritual and festival procedures; it always culminates in celebration. Participation male ritual celebrations enhances social capital by giving communities the opportunity for public celebration" (p. 47). But on the other hand, Salamone (2000) points out, "Celebration is identified by four essential characteristics: First, performance of cultural symbols, second, entertainment, third, undertaken in public place, and fourth, community participation. On the other hand, however, one of the defining characteristics of festival and ritual is the potential to facilitate community celebration" (p. 78). From the viewpoint of the theorists and economists, ritual celebration has got immense value. Schuster (1995), "Economist and other theorists may suggest that it is through celebration that one can achieve stronger economic success, there is an inherent value in celebration in itself when citizens are encouraged to participate in the creation and maintenance of the activities as a part of the shared life of the community" (p. 90). Earls (1993) argues;

The phenomena of celebration itself is found in all cultures. Consequently, festivals and rituals that have a celebratory theme allow people to participate in an occasion that generates a feeling of goodwill and community. Thus celebrations and festivals have the potential for strengthening communal ties and uniting people. These community celebrations, often developed as arts, or folk festivals are representative of the many aspects of the social and cultural fabric of the community in which they are celebrated. Furthermore, they facilitate the development of contemporary cultural identity, but enhance the wellbeing of the community by, among other things, providing an “opportunity to break away daily commitments and allowing us to socialize with family and friends within the larger community (p. 32).

VI. THE CONTEXT OF MALE RITUAL CIRCUMCISION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

We have various historicity concerning male ritual circumcision in Africa and the world as a whole. People have formed worldviews about this important ritual. It is generally believed that circumcision is a transition tool that transforms young people into adulthood. Bailey (2006) observes:

Male circumcision is one of the oldest and most widespread surgical procedures in the world. There have references to male circumcision in a cross-sectional and diverse cultures and religions. Basically, male ritual circumcision involves the surgical removal of some part of the foreskin of the male genitalia. In the context of the removal of the foreskin for either religious or culturally reasons, there is an entire compendium of meanings attached to the procedure. However, religion is the major determinant of male circumcision worldwide. In as far as the operation is concerned, male circumcision among adolescents is much more likely to be performed a coming –of-age ritual. This is experienced in many African societies and other ethnic groups. Globally, it is estimated that 30% of male above the age of 15 years are circumcised. Male circumcision for religious and cultural reasons is a relatively common practice in sub-Saharan African countries, where 28 of 45 Nations have circumcision prevalence exceeding 80%. Traditional male circumcision as a rite of passage is performed in pre-pubertal boys, adolescents or adults. The age of circumcision varies from country to country and ethnicity, ranging from six years (p. 172).

Boiro (2007) argues, “The majority of boys in East and Southern Africa are circumcised between 12 and 22 years of age. The wide range is majorly attributable to the different periods of the circumcision seasons of respective tribes; for example every even year among the Bukusu of Western Kenya, and twice a year in South Africa” (p. 32). From the various literature reviewed, circumcision is highly ritualized because of its significant contribution to the life of the individual. Marck (1997) observes as follows “Being a strong cultural practice among traditionally circumcising groups, traditional male circumcision is usually not an optional practice to be decided about on an individual basis. The timing of male circumcision on the other hand is a matter for individual decision. In communities where the fabric of society has become increasingly fragile and intergenerational support mechanisms are for various reasons, no longer sustained, adolescent boys may face ritual circumcision without any encouragement or social support (P. 60)”.

Ogubanjo (2004), “Conversely, there are reports of *ukubaleka* which means to escape into – the initiates run away from home to be circumcised at the circumcision school against the will or at least without the consent of the parents, who are aware of the potential dangers of traditional circumcision would not agree to having their sons circumcised traditionally” (p. 45). Vincent (2007) argues, “There is some anecdotal evidence from South Africa that homosexual orientation may have negative effect on a young person’s willingness to be circumcised in the context of initiation schools, and there has been anecdotal reporting of suicide in some cases. South African legislation has attempted to address these problems through the Application of Health Standards in Traditional Circumcision Act 2001, which makes parental consent obligatory in respect a prospective initiate who is under 21 years or who has not acquired adulthood” (p. 18). Vincent further argues, “A framework aiming to support specific provisional measures to enforce requirements for issues of consent (among others) was added through National Health Act No. 16 in 2004” (p. 14).

The Bukusu Male circumcision is given a ritual identification because of what it strives to realize. According to Frizer Karr (2004) while commenting on Emile Durkheim,s view on ritual;

Emile Durkheim posited a relationship between ritual behavior and the adherence to social order, putting collective veneration of the sacred at the heart of his theory of social solidarity. Ritual organized around sacred objects as its focal point and organized into cultic practice, was for Durkheim a fundamental source of collective conscience that provides individuals with meaning and binds them together into a community. From Durkheim’s observation it becomes apparent that, participation in rites integrates the individual into a social order both in one’s day-to-day relationships of life. And in those celebrations of the collective which bind one to the social entity as a whole. Veneration of an object held to be sacred by a community is a powerful affirmation of collective conscience and a call to obey communally defined morality (p. 189).

Stark and Finke (2000), opines, “Functionalism of Durkheim and focuses exclusively on religious rituals, rather than all repeated social interactions, arguing that confidence in religious explanations increases with ritual participation. Ritual generally follow customs or traditions, but they are deliberate ceremonies in

which the object is exchanged with a god or gods and the outcome is the reinforcement of the central ideas and ideals of the group. Rituals are thus intentional features of religious life and can shift with alterations in either the demand or supply of religious goods” (p. 135).

Emile Durkheim (1995), “a religious group is not simply a religious group with ritual precautions which a man is held to take in certain circumstances; it is a system of diverse rites, festivals and ceremonies which all have the characteristic that they reappear periodically. They fulfill the need which the believer feels of strengthening and affirming, at regular intervals of time, bond which unites him or her to the sacred beings to whom he depends (p. 67)”. Just like Bukusu male ritual circumcision, “Rituals often venerate heroic forbearers and those that brought salvation. The hero is a symbol of a society, the society’s model in many cases and a sort of ideal summing in one mythic individual of the chief characteristics of the various empirical members of the group(Hertz, 2009:12)”. Rituals and in this particular case male ritual circumcision are very powerful. They have a greater influence on the lives of those who partake of it. Collins (2004) contends, “Rituals are powerful because they instill social interaction based on bodily co-presence as mutual emotional attunement. When engaged in rituals, individuals feel a sense of solidarity with one another and imagine of themselves as members of a similar undertaking; they infused with emotional energy; and they establish and reinforce collective symbols, moral representations of the group that ought to be defended and reinforced; and they react angrily to insults toward or the profanation of these symbols (p. 56)”.

Giessen (2006) observes, “Ritual participation does not always perpetuate social order. For instance, growing self-consciousness is deadly to ritual participation and it is fundamentally spontaneous, emotional character (p. 191)”. Collins (2004) observes;

Formal rituals sometimes die or fail, or decay with time, such that they produce little or no feeling of group solidarity; no sense of one’s identity affirmed or changed; no respect for the group’s symbols; no heightened emotional energy. The decay of rituals provokes a sense of stale ceremonialism, inappropriateness, or even strong abhorrence. When ritual are imposed, rather than spontaneously joined, they usually provoke resentment and disgust. Apparently, the rejection of imposed rituals and the destruction of symbols associated with them seem to be typical elements in the collapse of the social orders so established, hence a violent reaction to a kind of formality that one wishes to never to be associated with or to go through (p. 16).

From the above statement, it becomes apparent that ritual should be handled carefully by the communities involved. This brings about the understanding of the possibilities of the functionalism and dysfunctionality of ritual in the society.

VII. EXPERIENCING SOCIAL CAPITAL THROUGH MALE RITUAL CIRCUMCISION AS A RITE OF PASSAGE

Indubitably, male ritual circumcision is among the many African cultures that are cherished. Despite the enormous resistance and opposition, circumcision has continued to thrive. Kratz (2003) observes, “Circumcision falls into the inventory of the innumerable cultures that Africans, as in many other communities of the world embrace and cherish. Male ritual circumcision has been one of the rites demarcating the stage of development in which the boy child passes into mature hood. Perhaps it is good to point out that in most African societies, one is born, lives, and dies within the appropriate rites of passage. That can take the form of circumcision, piercing of the nose, ears, lips, teeth extraction, cutting of certain fingers, and tattooing (p. 189)”.

Prazak (2000:45) observes that, “the painful process that is usually associated with the practice, or the marks that are left behind after going through the rite may denote, among others, age group, social status, increase in sexual attraction, and a man’s chastity before marriage. Male ritual circumcision, therefore, has immense social capital that societies practicing it cherish and find bliss in”. Every ritual including male ritual circumcision have very fundamental significance to the individual and the society as a whole. Boiro (2007) argues, “Circumcision has significance at the individual and sociocultural levels. It is associated with cleanliness, as reflected in common metaphors for circumcision, for example, to wash the hand in the Wolof culture in Senegal (p. 32)”.

According to Taljard (2003), “Improved genital hygiene is something that is almost globally equated with male circumcision in both traditionally circumcising and uncircumcising ethnic groups in Africa. The word ‘Ritual’ is defined as an adjective that derives from the noun ‘Rite’, meaning a ceremonial or formal solemn act, observance, or procedure with the prescribed custom. Ritual therefore is a set form of systems of rites, or the observance of a set form of system of rites (p. 67)”.

An in-depth analysis, the above description best suits this current study. This is a focal point where both, the ritual and the inherent social capital meet. Their practice and procedures may differ but the concept is the same. According to Kusimba (2004), “In the Bukusu male circumcision ceremonies, an initiate is made to carry special meet locally known *asluliki* from a lower under-section of a slaughtered bull as an act of honor from both the matriarchal and patriarchal lineages (p. 89)”. At every stage of the circumcision process, caution is observed not to subject the initiate to any risks. Corbitt (1998), observes, “And early in the morning of the

eventful day of circumcision, the initiate of is taken to the river to be smeared with mud all over his body, which is known as *khumana*. This and many other ritualistic acts serve to demonstrate the fact that the initiate has fulfilled the requirements that appertain to his change of status and he is on his final journey to cross the 'river' of childhood into adulthood (p. 112)".

Circumcision has a significant position in circumcising societies. It is not in vain that such communities have hang on this ritual for quite a long time despite the opposition. Several literature review reveal reasons why they have continued to hang on this ritual. Mwenda (2001) observes as follows:

The social status accorded to male circumcision is of crucial significance in traditionally circumcising communities, because being circumcised is the only way of attaining manhood. In Xhosa culture, male development starts during the first six to seven years of life, when a boy is not able to distinguish right from wrong, and is thus not held responsible for wrong that he might commit. Older boys are considered more capable of making informed judgments, although they are still not held fully responsible for their actions. It is only once they are circumcised that they are entitled to businesses, property or marriage, or to participate in other features of community life, such feasts and beer drinking ceremonies. Uncircumcised boys can have sexual relations with women, but are often rejected for being uncircumcised (p. 12).

During this whole period of circumcision, the young boys are vulnerable in many ways. Marck (1997) argues, "The social pressure to undergo circumcision puts uncircumcised boys at risk of ostracism. They are discriminated against in various ways, for example, they are given menial tasks and being called names. Similar societal structures are reported from Maasai groups and the Bukusu in Kenya where males become warrior once they are circumcised, and men are referred to as elders when their children have been circumcised (p. 7)". But for Michen (2004), "Male circumcision is considered essential for becoming a full member of the society among the Meru people of Kenya just like in Bendel State of Nigeria, and in Guinea-Bissau and Senegal (p. 189)".

Niang (2007) opines, "The male circumcision is a way of reinforcing masculinity, as the prepuce is considered to represent the womanhood. In addition, male circumcision is seen as a means of balancing the life cycles of men and women, male circumcision being considered equivalent to the loss of virginity in women (pp. 22-32)". In a broader perspective, circumcision ritual is seen as a uniting factor in community. Largade (2003) observes,

Most notably, however, male circumcision is perceived as the source of new social relations, among ethnic groups in Guinea Bissau and Senegal, the bonds between men circumcised in the same group being considered closer than those to their parents. Male circumcision is also of high social importance in relationships with women, who are reported as actively influencing men's decisions as to whether or not to be circumcised. In South Africa, 13% of traditionally circumcised men reported partner request as a reason for circumcision (p. 89).

In other words we can say that circumcision is an agent of social change; because young boys are influenced to adapt to new ways of lifestyle. In reference to the Xhosa people of South Africa, Crowley (1990) observes, "For the traditionally circumcising Xhosa people, Crowley state that no self-respecting Xhosa girl would marry a Xhosa male unless he had submitted to the circumcision ritual" (pp. 18-21).

Niang et al (2007) observe that, "religious dimensions are indicated when circumcising male adolescents and young men is done to show commitment to God and to offer a blood sacrifice to the ancestors and the earth (P.32)". Various studies have been generated with regard to the nature and functionality of circumcision ritual. In his book Taljaard (2003) observes, "A study from South Africa discusses a report on beliefs that not being circumcised is a cause of misfortune. On philosophical point of view, male circumcision involves a symbolic relationship to dying, initiation rites representing symbolic death, through pain and isolation from society, from which springs new life and rebirth as a new being – a man" (p. 16).

Male ritual circumcision such as of the Bukusu people in Bungoma County is manifested in various stages. According Van Gennep (1990), "Male circumcision as a rite of passage is classified into three-stage process of transition: separation from normal society, followed by a period of transformation, and finally reintegration into a new social status (p. 19)". In connection to this, various theories concerning circumcision have emerged in history. Gordon (1999),

Different theories regarding the origins of circumcision have been proposed by anthropologists. Some see its roots in the beginnings of the cultivation and settlements around 15,000 years ago, gradually spreading to other communities. Others believe that there were independent origins in different cultures. Apparently, why the practice evolved is not clear. The fact that most tribal cultures assign circumcision seasons to the ritual could be interpreted as male circumcision originating from fertility rite, developed as a sacrifice to the gods in exchange for good harvest (p.83).

In various communities, circumcision has been given several characterizations. In Bungoma County in Kenya, for example, "Circumcision takes place every even year after the harvest (Wagner, 1999: 46). Niang (2007), "Among the Balante in Guinea-Bissau and Senegal, circumcision ceremonies are held every four to six years; where by circumcision is performed in the rice fields symbolizing reverence to their ancestors and the earth (p. 15)". Other theories include "Male circumcision as being a religious rite of personal sacrifice and as a

way of marking God's children from ungodly nations (or, in different contexts, marking slaves and defeated warriors after warfare (Saucier, 1991: 16)).

As Sussane K. Langer (2002:18), ritual circumcision performance is an occasion where the less important comes to be declared important as boys evolve into men. Just a few moments before the initiate gets circumcised, he is held with no regard. And as seen in the literature review, he is described with no gender (Bowie, 2000), and as such he is referred to as "the child of so and so". But after circumcision, everything changes beginning with the initiate's own demeanor. The blow of the circumciser's whistle and the sound of the mother and aunt's ululation are signals to a sudden change of the initiate's status. In the researcher's own analysis from the African theological perspective, the researcher would say that male ritual circumcision among the Bukusu people is a reminiscent of the "Eucharistic" act. That is, an act that involves the giving of a special part of one's human flesh and spilling of blood as a binding between the living and the dead (Mbiti, 1975), and is purchase of communally recognized status.

For some unconscious or mystical reasons, the male elders of the Bukusu community ordain that boys must get circumcised. In this respect, the boys are traditionally required to sacrifice their flesh to the will of their ethnic community (Mbiti, 1975). The most apparent message that is passed on to the initiates at the performance of the ritual is that their bodies belong to the community and not to themselves as individuals (Mbiti, 1975). It is common knowledge that people who don't practice see these rituals with Mesmer and on the other hand, those who practice them like the Bukusu experience difficulties, but rather, it has its roots deeply entrenched in the beliefs and the social customs, which in many cases would defy the rational and humane comprehension. The Bukusu circumcision ritual practice is principally done not for medical reasons as is the case in the western communities (Bigelow, 1995).

VIII. TENACITY OF MALE RITUAL CIRCUMCISION IN GENERATING SOCIAL CAPITAL

There are apparent reasons why Bukusu ritual circumcision has continued survive despite the opposition. This is because of the inherent tenacity – power to withstand resistance. Commenting on ritual, Kang'ethe (2014) observes, "Perhaps the litmus test of a cultural strength is its continued existence and legacy despite efforts to annihilate it altogether. It is clear that the culture of male ritual circumcision has been under huge siege, socially and policy wise, especially with the wind of modernization, human rights activism, and the current globalization. At the time when Africa and Africans are feeling that these rites defined what an African was, there is then the urgent need for the resuscitation of these cultural rites. However, it would be unrealistic to expect these cultural rites to be revived in the same state they were practiced before their proscription. Admittedly, some of the rites may have had aspects that could be incompatible with the current environment but it is argued that they still have some invaluable aspects that could be harnessed and incorporated into the existing culture. Perhaps it is admissible that the readers, or the adherents accept the given dynamic nature of any culture, some of the goal posts as well as the social capital embedded therein may have to shift. The succinct value and social capital embedded in the cultural rite of male ritual circumcision cannot be clear if its meaning and what it stands for is not adequately conceptualized. Succinct conceptualization will help change the minds of the detractors who see the practice as one with perfidious ramifications. Largely, male ritual circumcision is not an exclusive African cultural practice. Regrettably and unfortunately, most scholars of the male circumcision practice tend to wink at the origin and portray it as an African cultural practice. This has had an effect to imperialists that view cultures from Africa as barbaric, second rate and lacking civilization and devoid of vision and development (p. 56)".

Conceptualizing male ritual circumcision and social capital through African voices

The purpose of conceptualizing is to acknowledge the fact that circumcision is a very important ritual that cannot be wished away. Shweder (2000) observes, "The succinct voices of the insiders, living in Africa or elsewhere, own and understand the practice of male ritual circumcision can help clear the minds of many people whose minds have been polluted with the result of only knowing and reflecting only what the outsiders have presented, whether in print or electronic media, or in any other forums of discourses" (p. 116). By all means ritual circumcision should be protected Frank (2005), "Those who adhere and therefore own the practice and are therefore reliable voices pertaining to the practice understand that the concept of male ritual circumcision form a rite of passage that encapsulates the attainment, enhancement, and maintenance of many cultural roles. The circumcision or operation on the genitalia is symbolic of the more detailed processes that form the rite of passage (p. 34)".

Ntombela (2009:13) argues, "Talking of male ritual circumcision as a mere removal of the foreskin is a misnomer. Revealingly, the structure of male ritual circumcision is more elaborate than most of the existing literature has been able to capture. It is succinctly certain that the discourse on African circumcision badly requires re-examination, reflection and possibly introspection in view of the fact that most of the current

discourses tend to overlook the more important processes that embeds this rite of passage. The state of the immense social capital inherent with the rite has unfortunately been obscured (p. 13)". According to Obermeyer(1999:87), "this is because of the fact that the world has been fed by the outsider voices, with insider voices given a raw deal. This is because of the inadequate engagement of patriotic and culturally pragmatic scholars to salvage the African cultures from decadence and extinction, if not for total annihilation (p. 25)". Even though, some Western scholars have risen to the challenge of defending the culture and its invaluableity. To this end, many Africans who stay in diaspora have had to come home to go through the circumcision process. Most notably, FuambaiAhmadu (2000) observed:

It is difficult for me considering the number of ceremonies I have observed, including my own, to accept that what appear to be expressions of joy and ecstatic celebrations of womanhood in actuality disguise hidden experiences of coercion and subjugation. Indeed, I offer that the bulk of kono women who uphold these rituals do so because they want to – they relish the supernatural powers of their ritual leaders over against men in society, and they brace the legitimacy of female authority and, particularly, the authority of their mothers and grandmothers (Ahmadu, 2000:24).

Reacting on some of the views raised by Ahmadu, Mukim (2013) observes, arguably, the experience and views of Ahmadu are applicable to her ethnic belonging in Sierra Leone and may be equally applicable in other settings in Africa such as Kenya and Sudan where similar rite of passage is practiced. The statement, however, underscores some very fundamental facts on ownership, niche and meaning grounded in male circumcision in Africa as well (p. 18)". The practice of male ritual circumcision. Mukim further argues, "Circumcision is full of immeasurable social capital that can only be communicated to the world or rather tapped by those who experience the practice. The cultural architects would wish that those who share the same opinion, knowledge and insights such as Ahmadu above could grab any opportunity either in print or electronic media to dispel the skewed and frivolous information surrounding male ritual circumcision (p. 23)".

Male ritual circumcision goes beyond spilling of blood: A niche of the social capital

Prazak (2000:97) argues, "in many settings where male circumcision is practiced, the rite is more than just spilling the boy's blood as the human rights activists and other agencies claim. There are more elaborate activities and learning sessions in the course of the rite". Vincent (2006) agrees with Ahmadu in several ways:

An equally important point from Ahmadu's observation is the ownership of the process of male ritual circumcision. To this end, most of the literature on rite of passage tends to fallaciously concentrate on the cutting part, hence obscuring, or ignoring other important meanings grounded in the rite. Such information also disregards ethical consideration in that it is more often passed to the world without the consent of the boys and the next of kin involved. Indubitably, the anthropologists believe that the sanctity, truths and insights surrounding cultures can only be told by the insiders. The outsiders may mimic but they may not communicate the real issues. Most of the current discourse of male ritual circumcision in Africa suffers immensely from the lack of constructive opinion on the structure and significance of this rite of passage. This misplaced handling of the culture of male circumcision could largely explain why some scholars, mostly from the west loudly and unashamedly indicate that the culture needs to be driven to state of extinction and that those who continue the practice need to face the full wrath of the law (p. 169).

Fallaciously, the owners of the culture have been assumed to be passive to accept the "verdict, without any resistance or any form of appeal. This explains battles that have been going on between the law enforcement agencies and the cultural adherents in countries where the norms have persisted though clandestinely (Fredrich (2014:33)". Kenya is such a good example; "Such imperialistic and autocratic approach to cultures the outsiders cannot fathom and understand has itself disregarded the cultural rights of societies enshrined in many constitutions of the world as well as the Bill of Rights. Perhaps it is this premise of the outsider perspective that has brought in different perfidious notions of the practice. First and foremost, it has been branded as barbaric and not attuned to the culture of any developed world (Kidd, 2006: 13)". According to Fredrich and Kang'ethe (2014:87), "the cultural architects use this forum to ask for appropriate questions and titles of the practice if at all it requires any name branding. They are of the view that the male ritual circumcision should be referred to as surgery or an operation. This argument should not be viewed as a new war by a few Afrocentric scholars, but a rather a discourse aimed at attaining cultural identity, cultural autonomy, independence and emancipation, cultural realism, cultural renaissance, and repositioning to take its rightful niche". Debate has continued over the validity of male ritual circumcision in this time and age. The bone of contention is going against the grain of modernity and what it comes with. Afolayan (2004) observes, "The discourse has become a bone of contention between universalities, human rights activists and cultural relativists (p. 34)".

Gruebaum (2005) observes, "During the colonial administration, theme for many social change efforts was enlightenment, drawing the subject of people out of the traditions that Europeans deemed harmful, beliefs considered non-Western, and practices that obstructed the smooth of the colonial political and economic control. Campaigns against indigenous rituals, for example, circumcision as a rite of passage into manhood were common during the colonial power (p. 433)". In view of the above points, Mukim (2013) clearly reiterates,

“Destruction of the African cultures was not because there was something wrong with the cultures, but African cultures fell victim of a larger capitalistic scheme by the West to achieve colonial leadership, hegemony and imperialism (p. 76)”. However, in regard to secondary sources, besides (Makila, 1978), and Wippen, (1977), literature that address historical and religious aspects of the Bukusu culture respectively, there was no other study that specifically addresses issues of practice of male ritual circumcision and education among the Bukusu as an ethnic community. But there is a substantial amount of literature that has been written on different aspects of the Bukusu culture. Information on Bukusu culture exists in form of articles published in newspapers and magazines, many of which are in hard cover while some exist electronically. While Makilas (1978) works covers a wider spectrum of the migratory movement and fundamental dimensions of the history of the Bukusu people, Wippen’s (1977) study was focused on the two protestant religious movements: the *Dini ya Mswamba* in Bungoma and the *cult of Mumbo* among the Kisii of Nyanza Province. No other study has been done specifically on the subject of Bukusu ritual circumcision in relation to its impacts on social, psychological and economic aspects in the region. While this study adds a voice to the covered literature on a variety of Bukusu cultural beliefs and customs, its principle objective has been to investigate, examine, and inform the public about the role ritual circumcision has played in relations to the social, economic, moral and intellectual development of adolescents among the Bukusu of Western Kenya.

In the English language, a variety of terms are used to define different forms of the severing of the parts of human sexual organs. The term circumcision has been generally applied to the surgical operations done on both male and female. However, as seen in the literature review, some scholars maintain that *circumcision* is a misplaced terminology. They prefer excision as the correct term. In the recent past, the term FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) has been employed, especially by the World Health Organization (WHO), and a variety of Human Rights agencies (Wangila, 2004) Abu –Sahlieh, 1994).

Unlike the controversies among the world’s NGO clashing with local ethnic groups over the female circumcision with the former calling for its eradication (McLean & Graham, 1980); Mugo M. 1997), Murray, 1973), according to the findings based on interviews and observations, many voices in my study have been to advocate for adaptation of the modern hygienic ways of circumcising the male adolescents. However, in comparison with the FGM, the dialogues on male circumcision does not seem to stimulate heated debate. But, as demonstrated in this study, the dissenting voices such as those of health administrators, middle aged groups, devout christian members, and the educated elites that have gained prominence against male ritual circumcision, have been focused more on the rite’s modification other than its eradication.

Generation of social capital through Male ritual circumcision as a festival

In the Bukusu context in Bungoma County, “Male ritual circumcision culminates into festival because it brings people together. For the case of circumcision the climax is usually informed by celebrations and merry making” (Otiende, 2004: 13). Before understanding circumcision as a ritual, the researcher would like to define the word festival and its underlying significance. Rippon, (2008) observes, “Festivals have been a feature of human life for hundreds of years. Many originated in the form of celebrations of solar or lunar cycles, or of the seasons. Others are rooted in the religious or pan ritual (p. 23)”. Falassi (1987) defines festival as, “The Latin origins of the term festival are *fiesta* and *feriare*, which emphasizes the features of public merriment, abstinence from work and religious worship” (p. 7). Falassi’s own definition of the term, which he suggests is more suitable within a social science context, than is general dictionary definition, states that, festival commonly means:

A periodically re-occurring, social occasion in which, through a multiplicity of forms and a series or subsequent coordinated events, participate directly or indirectly and to various degree, all members of a community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds and sharing similar worldview (Falassi, 1987:2).

Based on the above definition of festival, Kerry (2006) gives a critique of this definition,

Male ritual circumcision fits in that category because in its final stages it achieves the purpose of bringing people together. However, it is not clear in this definition whether the proponent of it sees festivals as socially divisive or socially cohesive. Alternatively his definition portrays festivals as a coming together of a community of people of single ethnicity or religion, thus implying the exclusion of people of other ethnic standing or religions. If the former interpretation is taken, an emphasis on festival as a vehicle of social cohesion is implied. Many festivals are now not attached to seasonal or solar cycles, nor do many include a religious component. In the contemporary setting, in addition to seeking to entertain, festivals endeavor to regenerate, promote creativity, increase tourism, perpetuate the local tradition, or the building of community cohesion (p. 114).

Falassi (1987) suggests, “It is probable to classify festivals using a methodology which focuses on a range of ritual acts, or rites, which happen within the festival time and space. These include, for example, rites of display and rites of consumption, rites of exchange and rites of reversal: that is, symbolic inversion of normal life of a culture. He sees a festival as being bounded by the framing rituals which open and close, the festival, allowing the modification of time and space” (p. 112). Van Gennep (1960:138) discusses as follows, “This

concept is useful to the study of festivals, for its emphasis is on the special features of the middle stage of the ritual, the period that is between the opening and closing framing of rituals. In a broader sense, nature and suspension of everyday life within this middle stage, shows or implies similarities to the features of carnival (p. 138)". While Bakhtin (1968) argues "ritual evokes the concept of festival period as being a time which offers participants the chance to relook at the patterns of daily life (p. 17)". On the same, Turner (1969:274) opines, "ritual is engendered by a sense of being in a phase which is different from everyday life" (p. 274). The emphasis on community aligns with the theory of social capital framing this study. Van Gennep (1960) theorizes,

The liminal phase of the rite of passage, local social cohesion may be reinforced following the arrival of strangers in large numbers preparing to enact a ritual. Local inhabitants are quite likely to leave the village and take refuge somewhere else just in the same way the Edinburg residents were reputed to depart on holiday when tourists arrive for the festivals. The coming of strangers may encourage local residents to close their doors and gather together, excluding strangers. Now it becomes apparent that when people of different backgrounds and affiliations gather together, there is likelihood of sharing of information which can be beneficial to the society. The potential for the integration of strangers is of relevance because new ideas and ideals are manifested (p. 36).

In agreement with the above sentiments, Mbiti (1991) observes, "Circumcision is a form of initiation that brings people together. It is an important stage, through which young people in many parts of Africa have to go. This stage shuts the door to childhood, and opens another to adulthood. It makes the young people active members of the community, and no longer simply passive children (p. 102)".

Based on the objectives of this study, Arcodia (2000) observes, "The festival of circumcision orchestrates the spirit of the community being renewed. It is done through this periodic initiation with all the feasting that goes with it. The entire people are brought together: the departed, the living and those yet to be born, because now the gate for marriage and family life is opened for the initiates. Festivals are celebrations of something the local community wishes to share (p. 13)". Male ritual circumcision is just one such celebration because it is a discourse which involves the public as participants in the experience. Robb (2000) observes, "Circumcision as a festival must have as a prime objective a maximum amount of people participation, which must be an experience that is different from or broader than day to day living. It is not necessary to extend hands on experience by more than day, though it is often economically desirable (p. 338)". Based on the foregoing view, Gertz (1997) opines, "A key characteristic of a festival is the sense of community and celebration engendered by an occasion, which is public and freely accessed gathering involving a variety of modes such as arts, craft, performances and demonstrations. Festivals are a sacred and profane time of celebration marked by special observances. Undoubtedly, such observances can be like male ritual circumcision. Historically, the way festivals celebrated special occasions were through art, ritual circumcision, and related festivity (p. 209)".

IX. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this section of the paper, the focus has been on understanding the essence, meaning, and origin of this fundamental phenomena of "Social Capital", thus addressing the question of the elements and meaning of social capital in reference to Bukusu male ritual circumcision. Being a dependent variable in this study, the analysis concerning its meaning and composition generated a discourse upon which to anchor the study in reference to male ritual circumcision. The baseline was to underscore the concept and meaning of social capital. According to the findings, the Bukusu male ritual circumcision is not empty! This is confirmed by some of the lived examples of people who went through this ritual. They attest of the positive impacts the ritual had on their lives. From the literature reviewed, little is articulated concerning social capital as a composition of elements, which can only be generated when cultural aspects that bring people together are practiced. The study sought to fill that gap. Holistic meaning of social capital is actualized whenever rituals and festivals take place. It is only through such environments that people come together when norms like trust, generosity, reciprocity, social cohesiveness, and mutuality are attained.

The discussions and findings thereof revealed that the Bukusu male ritual circumcision is a platform upon which social capital can be generated. This is realized when the ritual brings together people; and in the process of celebration, the dynamics of relationship, trust, honesty, integrity, social cohesiveness and so on are strengthened. The failure on the constant acknowledgement of rituals particularly Bukusu male ritual circumcision as fundamental sources of social capital is a misnomer. This is indeed another gap which would be filled through cautious recognition of Bukusu male ritual circumcision and the subsequent building of social capital. This would be made possible through leveraging on conceptualization of ritual through African voices. The government should come up with proper legislation on the recognition of cultural rituals, festivals and rites as avenues within which knowledge can be drawn to facilitate social, economic, and political development. Going by the sentiments of Haralambos & Horlborn (2007), "Social capital as manifested is such a phenomena as taking part in clubs and organizations, socializing with people outside one's immediate family, taking part in

politics, doing voluntary work, and playing sports, particularly team sports” (p.863). Hence, in the subsequent development, the researcher focused much on the obligation of Bukusu male ritual circumcision towards the generation of social capital in the context of social economy. The anticipation is that by having elaborate recognition of cultural rites like male ritual circumcision, the society can benefit from the invaluable social capital inherent in them. Hence, the subsequent chapter of this study sought to understand the role of Bukusu male ritual circumcision to social capital in the context of the social economy.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study therefore recommends that Bukusu male ritual circumcision should be recognized as important ritual that marks the heritage and identity of the Bukusu people. Some norms, values and attitudes on Bukusu male ritual circumcision are good while others are negative and dehumanizing. All that advocates for human rights such as the Christian community and other agencies should engage with institutions to mitigate the negative and dehumanizing aspects of male ritual circumcision. This could be through open forums that discuss these cultural practices that highlight, educate and empower young people and others on the situation and importance of circumcision ritual. While concurring with other speakers on the forum by staying in favor of the continuity of the male circumcision rite among the Bukusu people, the researcher offered his suggestions, which he thought if adhered to, would make it more safe and hygienic. The researcher also found these suggestions more realistic and concrete, and would recommend them for by Bungoma County and National Government authorities for adoption. In suggesting that it was fine for certain core elements within the ritual to be preserved, the researcher also proposed that for the critical sanitary reasons, it is imperative for certain other elements to be modified. The researcher’s Four-point comprehensive proposal went as follows:

1. Bukusu male ritual circumcision to undergo a modification so as to shed off the retrogressive aspects and keep those that are valuable to the subjects of circumcision. The modification should be done with a focus on mobilizing the immense social capital that is beneficial to both the individual and the society.
2. All practitioners’ operatives, which include the circumcisers, nurses and nurse aides to be supervised by the County office of health. The ministry of health in conjunction with the county authorities under the county government Act to legislate laws and statutes that will govern all ritual practices. These laws and statutes, he proposed, would compel all practitioner will include ritual circumcisers and local nurses and nurse aides that participate in the rituals to be registered with the County Government concerned offices and be issued with certificates of operation, which will be subject to renewal annually.
3. All practitioners to attend mandatory regular meetings, seminars, and trainings on sanitary health care under the organization of the ministry of Health in the County. Particular attention can be directed to care and proper use of tools such as traditional circumcisers’ knives and their finger nails (one knife one initiate policy to be instituted) as a means of mitigating the infectious spreading of hepatitis B and related ailments.
4. All prospective initiates for either traditional ritual circumcision or clinical ritual circumcision to be registered in advance between the month of January and April of every circumcision year and the names forwarded to the County authorities. This will be done basically for statistical and budgetary purposes in regard to the supply of sanitary equipment.
5. Society and to be particular learning institutions should see rituals as sources of social capital upon which economies can grow. This can happen through a process of legislation in order to recognize rituals as fundamentals to social-economic and political stability. The curriculum should give emphasize on embracing rituals such as circumcision in order to tap on the value-based education embedded in them.

The second recommendation relates to objective two, which sought to evaluate the relationship between Bukusu Male ritual Circumcision and social capital. The study found out that Bukusu male ritual circumcision has immense social capital, which is manifested through various forms such as trust, social cohesion, patience, integrity, community, tolerance and so on. These elements if recognized and utilized can be of great importance to the society as well as individuals. This study therefore recommends that Bukusu male ritual circumcision should be recognized as a source of immense social capital because it provides core elements of preparation to the African child’s real life situation. This would enable the initiates to have the capacity to think about who they are and where they came from, articulate their beliefs and customs, and authentically formulate knowledge that sustains their history, beliefs and customs. For example, participants of the thirteen-member forum of the discussions had the capacity to remember and clearly articulate what they knew with regard to the cultural practices. They demonstrated their capability in critical analysis of the circumcision rite which they practiced for ages. In their analysis, they were not only focused on the positive, but also on the negative aspects that accompany the male ritual circumcision practices. Some of these negative aspects include the economic and health effects to the initiates and the entire community. Sorcery and witchcraft are the vices that are collectively guarded against and most circumcision ceremonies. This explains the reason why the initiates are always guarded, guided and assisted by a selected group of the male and female close relatives.

Cultural ritual enhancement programs need to be developed to train youth and the society as a whole appropriate ways of rising up children to embrace a liberated view on Bukusu male ritual circumcision. The community and the country would do well to tap from indigenous knowledge on nurturing young people to embrace the responsibility of blossoming and jealously guarding their heritage and sexuality for posterity of the society. This has to blend in with the contemporary scientific knowledge that contextually addresses issues to do with circumcision ritual. The following process will greatly enhance such education in this modern era.

The third recommendation relates to the third objective, which sought to investigate the role and function of social capital generated by Bukusumale ritual circumcision in the social economy. The study recommends that the County and National Governments should explore ways of how to expedite the process of mobilizing cultural resources such as male ritual circumcision in order to grow the economy. There is need for the society, especially through the modern and church lens, to listen more attentively and resolutely and to honestly seek to understand the importance of rituals such as Bukusu male ritual circumcision by creating channels and forums for free dialogue on issues pertinent to their heritage especially male ritual circumcision. This will provide authentic curriculum content for the training of pastors, religious and cultural instructors on male ritual circumcision. This will help avoid sloppiness when handling very important rituals of the community. The social economy in the society won't thrive in the environment where there is animosity against the rituals that have the capacity to bring people together, generate social networks and trust. The manifestation of social capital elements in the social economy through male ritual circumcision would bring about social stability, tolerance, trust. Sense of community, respect among people, and sense of sanctity of life and so on. In the presence of all these forms of social capital in the social economy would generate social enterprises that would improve people's livelihoods. While it is important to note the Bukusu culture is a growing culture as seen in the research data, it is also important to recognize the fact that time have changed. As some members on the forum conceded in chapter six, the present generation is living in different and difficult times. The Bukusu traditional wealth which was valued in form of cattle has now been transformed into cash. Land, which is the community's main resource has become less and over utilized with increased population. This increased population has also resulted into heightened levels of diseases, which were otherwise unknown to the community, more especially HIV/AIDS pandemic. Based on the findings from the interviews, a number of the participants, especially from among the middle-aged groups were of the opinion that the ritual has become obsolete and therefore it is high time for it to be eradicated. These sentiments can also be attributed to the social-economic, health, and religious changes taking place in the modern society. As noted in the literature and the preceding chapters, cultures are dynamic, and beliefs, customs, norms, and values are subject to change. Therefore, change of certain elements in the Bukusu male ritual circumcision is still viewed, and a larger extend maintained as a major means of achieving manhood in the Bukusu community, success in formal education is becoming increasingly an over-arching factor. From this point of view, the social capital embedded in ritual circumcision can be tapped upon to grow the social economy hence; the social enterprises that would be people's livelihood.

Predicated on these recommendations, the researcher envisions that the Bukusu traditional male circumcision ritual would evolve itself into a benevolent agent for a reconstruction of an informed, healthy and organized society. As observed during interviews, these proposals would bring some form of order in the way traditional practices are carried out. Besides instilling order, these proposals would also minimize the differences and tensions that have existed between the government administration, human rights activists, and the media in relation to the practice of the traditional ceremonies.

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